



MAY 2021

COMMUNITY SAFETY WORKING GROUP (CSWG)

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 Charge to the CSWG

Community Safety Working Group

The Community Safety Working Group was assigned the following purpose: “to (a) make recommendations on alternative ways of providing public safety services to the community and (b) make recommendations on reforms to the current organizational and oversight structures of the Amherst Police Department. “

We were specifically charged with:

- Studying the complex issues of delivering community safety services to ensure racial equity
- Collecting data from people’s experiences in Amherst-- engaging the communities most impacted by policing to develop alternatives and identify solutions to diagnosed problems
- Investigating existing alternative models and programs for providing community safety services
- Examining existing Town funding priorities re: safety services
- Exploring models of resident oversight of police departments
- Recommending reforms to the current organizational and oversight structures

Our charge calls for us to submit two written reports:

- The first on “alternative options to public safety services currently provided by the Amherst Police Department”. The revised due date for this report was May 15th. This document is our first report.
- The second on “recommendations for resident oversight and for policy reforms for the Amherst Police Department.” Due June 30, 2021.

The charge to the Working Group specified that we would have nine voting members and that “no fewer than six of the nine voting members shall represent Black, Indigenous, People of Color, or other historically marginalized communities.”

The full charge to the CSWG appears in the Appendices.

MEMBERSHIP: Tashina Bowman, Darius Cage, Debora Ferreira, Pat Ononibaku, Brianna Owen Co-Chair, Russ Vernon-Jones, Elisha Walker, Co-Chair, Paul Wiley (Please see note below.)

Our identities include: African-American, African, Cape Verdean, Latina, Asian, White, renter, homeowner, business owner, high school student, social worker, attorney, youth worker, local church member, University administrator, former Amherst public school principals, former Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, individuals who have been harassed and mistreated by police, individuals friendly with police officers, parents of Black children of all ages, lived in Amherst for 40 years, graduate of ARHS, graduate of UMass Amherst, former foster youth, etc.

Note: Paul Wiley served ably as our Chair until April 23, when he resigned from the CSWG for personal reasons. He remains supportive of the CSWG, our findings, and recommendations.

ACTIVITIES

Meetings

We have met weekly (except for holidays) in open public meetings, since November 19th.. Most meetings were about two hours in length. Attendance and participation have been outstanding throughout. Administrative Assistant Jennifer Moyston has been our excellent staff liaison and attended every meeting – Zoom hosting, taking minutes, and keeping us in good communication between meetings. Town Manager Paul Bockelman has been at almost every meeting – primarily as an observer, and occasionally helpfully answering questions from the group.

Our meetings have involved sharing what we've learned, robust discussions, proposals and counter-proposals, open expressions of disagreement, respect for each other, and a deep commitment to a shared vision of an Amherst that is equitable, safe, healthy and inclusive; is serving its residents well, and that is taking concrete steps to dismantle systemic racism.

Community Input

We held two open forums where members of the public came and shared their experiences, perspectives, and recommendations with us. We offered a public comment period at the beginning of every weekly meeting where members of the public who wanted to share a comment or relevant information had the opportunity to do so at almost every meeting. We conducted an online survey and invited all members of the public to participate. We contracted with a local consulting firm, 7 Generations Movement Collective, to conduct outreach to marginalized populations and analyze the data they gathered. Their outreach report is in the Appendices and we'll say more about their work later in this report. Members of our group met with the Executive Directors of both the Chamber of Commerce and the BID, and had conversations with business people, social service providers, and other community leaders.

Connections with the Amherst Police Department and Others

We developed an extensive set of questions for the Amherst Police Department, submitted them in writing, and in response received a significant quantity of information and data from the APD. The Chief of Police and two Captains met with us on April 21st and May 5th, 2021 offering us brief presentations, answering questions, and participating in an open dialogue over a wide range of issues with our group. Members of our group also consulted with the Fire Chief. We worked closely with the Town Procurement Officer, Anthony Delaney in obtaining consultant services to assist in meeting our charge.

Research and study

Members of the CSWG have participated in investigating the issues, best practices, and efforts in other municipalities including:

- National studies and recommendations
- Websites of national organizations addressing making policing more equitable, accountable, and effective; and those advocating alternatives to policing
- Webinars – national and regional
- News reports on community responder programs around the nation
- Attending public meetings of initiatives in other municipalities
- Reports, findings, and recommendations from community safety groups in other municipalities in Massachusetts and beyond
- Attending online trainings
- Reviewing data gathered by other local groups

CONTEXT AND PERSPECTIVES

The murder of George Floyd was a pivotal event in the public consciousness of the nation. It was part of a long history of the murder of Black people by police and vigilantes. It was also viewed online by millions, both in the U.S. and abroad, and left no doubt that a horrific injustice was being done while other police officers stood by and watched. It awoke the nation to the role that policing itself (not just a few bad apples) has played and is playing in controlling black and brown bodies through violence, intimidation, and constant threat. Millions demonstrated in the streets in what may have been the largest nationwide protests in our history. We began to have a national discussion about whether policing is the best way to provide public safety and about whether the resources being used to fund police departments could more effectively contribute to safe and healthy communities by being used in other ways. The Amherst Town Council also has acknowledged an awareness of these issues. The Council has adopted “A Resolution Affirming the Town of Amherst’s Commitment to End Structural Racism and Achieve Racial Equity for Black Residents.” In it, the Council stated that it “affirms its commitment to eradicating the effects of systemically racist practices of Town government and Town-affiliated organizations, and will review and revise its policies, procedures, bylaws, values, goals, and missions through an anti-racism lens to foster an unbiased and inclusive environment that is free of discrimination, harassment, and negative stereotyping toward any person or group.”

Questions and history

We began to ask some basic questions. What situations require a municipality to send an officer with a gun, and what situations could be better addressed by someone without a gun and with different expertise?

Policing in the United States began with slave patrols in the South created to capture Black people seeking freedom from the involuntary servitude of chattel slavery. With the Great Migration, police departments grew in northern cities, charged with controlling black and brown people and protecting the property of well-to-do whites people. The list of black people killed by police just in the last decade is long and horrifying. In addition to George Floyd, some of the names of those who lost their lives at the hand of the police are **Daunte Wright, Rayshard Brooks, Daniel Prude, Breonna Taylor, Atatiana Jefferson, Aura Rosser, Stephon Clark, Tamir Rice, Tanisha Anderson**, and the list goes on. The question to ask is if there had been an alternative to armed police would the outcome have been different? Given this history, it is logical to ask whether an armed, predominately white, police force can ever provide a sense of safety and security to Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

We are proud that the Town of Amherst is participating in asking these questions and re-evaluating how best to provide safety services that address the needs of all our residents. We are honored to have been selected to examine these issues in Amherst and make recommendations.

Previous efforts

Amherst has tried. The Amherst Police Department has a thoughtful, professional Chief of Police. In recent years the Department has adopted a good number of the recommended progressive police reforms—an anti-bias policy, use of force policies, community policing, and attempting to diversify the force racially through hiring practices. Our investigations have found that none of these initiatives have succeeded in creating a sense of safety and trust among members of our BIPOC communities. This is in part because the history of policing still affects perceptions; it is in part because of the endless string of murders of BIPOC by police and other consistently discriminatory police practices across the nation; and it is in part due to recurring threatening, discriminatory, and disrespectful actions toward BIPOC residents of Amherst by APD officers. More detail about this is included in the “Findings” section of this report and in the more extensive report from our consultants which is in the Appendices.



Dismantling systemic racism

Amherst is currently engaged with another question, beyond the details of how best to provide safety services and what role is appropriate for the police. That is the question of how to dismantle systemic racism. How to create a town that is equitable, just, and inclusive. How to dismantle centuries of domination by white people in the affairs, culture, and government of the town. How to create a community in which no residents are second-class citizens, where none are viewed as “other”, where historic wrongs are right and repaired, where we all work together to dismantle barriers and divisions.

The work of the Community Safety Working Group is part of this larger question of how we dismantle systemic racism in Amherst. We believe that this requires:

1. Listening to BIPOC community members about the current situation and their recommendations
2. Sharing leadership with BIPOC members and taking responsive action in partnership with BIPOC community members to address identified needs and problems.
3. Increasing the power and voice of BIPOC community members in making decisions in any and all areas and especially where issues of equity are present.

Composition

The CSWG was designed to have at least 6 out of 9 members be from BIPOC or other marginalized communities. We applaud the Town Manager and Town Council for conceiving and creating this composition of the Working Group. It has been important throughout our work. It has made a difference for both BIPOC and White members to be able to work together in a BIPOC space. Having a large majority of our group with some shared lived experiences and some shared elements of cultural style, and not having to guard against or battle white domination have enhanced our effectiveness in thinking freshly and creatively to address long-standing problems. We recommend that the Town use this composition in some other bodies in town, and especially in the Resident Oversight Board for safety services which we recommend creating.

In addition to asking the question of how to best provide equitable safety services for all community members, we have also been guided by the question of how the way we provide safety services, including policing, in Amherst could contribute to the dismantling of systemic racism. We believe this is a question that every department of town government and board and committee of the town should be examining with regard to its area of focus. It takes courage and fresh eyes to see how much each function in town currently allows the needs of the BIPOC community to be secondary and prioritizes the concerns of white residents; how much almost every municipal body is made up of white people, hears from white people, and has its discussions among white people. This can change, but only if each entity makes it a priority and persists in seeking to reduce white domination.

OUR FINDINGS

Development of alternative safety programs

Across the country, many municipalities are finding alternative ways to provide safety services in situations that do not require a police officer with a gun. Some have existed for a long time and some are new responses to the demands for change that arose after George Floyd's murder at the hands of police. We've investigated alternative programs in Eugene, OR, Denver and Albuquerque, and read brief reports of many others. The CAHOOTS program in Eugene, has existed since 1989. It responds to non-violent mental health 911 calls with a trained mental health counselor and a medic. Since the racial justice protests in the summer of 2020 several hundred municipalities have asked CAHOOTS for information about implementing similar programs.

One of the most helpful resources we found in this area is a report issued jointly by the Law Enforcement Action Partnership and the Center for American Progress in October 2020, "[The Community Responder Model: How Cities Can Send the Right Responder to Every 911 Call](#)". It provides background information, descriptions of the community responder model, recommendations for implementing such a program, and examples of eight existing programs. We also obtained some additional information from them regarding how different municipalities with the model are handling calls and dispatch. The document linked above is a good source for learning more about why this model is being adopted more widely and what it looks like in different places.



Expectations/responsibilities of police have expanded

Police today are expected to respond to situations and provide services reaching far beyond the responsibilities of police in the past. Both Chief Scott Livingstone and Captain Ronald Young shared with the CSWG how different the expectations of police officers are today compared with when they were both young officers in Amherst more than 30 years ago. Officers today are charged with responding to mental health issues, substance abuse, houselessness, and more. Furthermore, they are expected to provide helpful service and solve problems, not simply arrest individuals with problems. Their experience is confirmed in the national literature about policing. Police today are expected to deal with myriad situations that lie outside their primary areas of expertise. Our Chief expressed some enthusiasm for finding other ways for our town to respond to many of these needs.



Recommendations of best practices and policies for policing

There is extensive literature on recommendations for effective policing. We've consulted the "Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, May 2015". It has 59 specific recommendations, some of which have already been implemented or partially implemented in Amherst. "The New Era of Public Safety, 2019" from The Leadership Council on Human and Civil Rights has useful chapters on Bias-free Policing; Stops, Searches, and Arrests; Use of Force; Data; and Accountability.

There is considerable debate between those, including the two reports, just mentioned, who advocate "community policing" and those who advocate shrinking the police presence in all BIPOC communities, replacing many police with alternative responders, and transferring funds from police departments to other services that will contribute to community safety and reduced crime. There are many thoughtful recommendations to defund the police.

(<https://m4bl.org/defund-the-police/>)

We have sought to explore each of these, understand the reasoning behind each, and craft a set of recommendations for Amherst that prioritizes equity and safety, and fits the circumstances of our town.

Survey results

The CSWG designed an online survey where participants could submit their responses confidentially. This was available on the Town website and invitations to participate were shared through the media generally used by the Town to advertise events and at the public forums and meetings of the CSWG. The questions on the survey are included in the Appendices. We make no claims that this data is representative of the residents of Amherst. The data here simply represents the experiences and viewpoints of those who submitted responses to the survey online.

Thirty-six participants submitted responses.

16 White

11 BIPOC

9 No race given

Below are some of the questions and a summary of the responses received.

What experiences have you (or your relatives or friends) had with the Amherst Police Department?

9 described a positive experience

12 described a negative experience

15 described experiences that were neutral or about which they had no complaint.

Have you experienced or been made aware of situations in which white people and BIPOC were treated differently by the Amherst Police Department?

21 responded "Yes"

If you are a BIPOC person, do you believe you or your family members or friends have been racially profiled or treated differently because of being BIPOC?

9 out of 11 responded "Yes"

Are you aware of incidents in which low-income people, young people, or people of other marginalized identities, were treated differently from others?

20 responded "Yes"

What, if any, situations currently being addressed by the police do you believe could be more effectively or appropriately dealt with through non-threatening, alternative public safety services?

20 suggested situations very similar to those proposed for the CRESS program to handle

Police data on vehicle stops

Analysis of data provided by the APD re: vehicle stops 2010 - 2020 shows the following:

- Compared with White drivers, when a Black driver was stopped by police, the reason given for the stop was twice as likely to be “investigatory” rather than a traffic or equipment violation or accident. An investigatory stop is “for investigative purposes based upon reasonable suspicion that the person has committed, is committing, or is about to commit a crime, under circumstances that do not amount to probable cause for arrest.” (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2019)
- Black drivers accounted for only 6% of all crashes but 8.4% of all stops and 14.5% of all “investigatory” stops.
- Black drivers stopped by police were 1.45 times more likely to be searched, and 1.5 times more likely to be arrested, than White drivers.
- When Black drivers were stopped by police, they were about 1.25 times more likely than White drivers to be stopped for over 30 minutes.
- When Black drivers were searched by police, the reason given was 20% less likely to be probable cause, and nearly twice as likely to be “reasonable suspicion,” compared with White drivers.
- These statistics, which represent a decade of policing in Amherst, indicate that Black drivers speed less and are involved in fewer car accidents, but are stopped, searched, and arrested disproportionately relative to White drivers. When they are searched, the search is slightly more likely to result in a finding of “nothing found” than searches of vehicles owned by white people (61% of searches of Black drivers, versus 57% for White drivers). And Black drivers were significantly more likely than White drivers to be stopped, searched, and arrested by Amherst Police for an “investigatory reason,” and under the auspices of “reasonable suspicion”, rather than for “probable cause.”

Additional Data provided by the Amherst Police Department

The chart below shows that 11.4 percent of the traffic stops the APD made in 2019 involved a Black person even though according to the Census Black people only makeup about 6.4 percent of the town population. Black people were nearly twice as likely to be pulled over by police than would be indicated by their proportion of the Town population.

<i>RACE</i>	<i>2019 STOPS</i>	<i>2019 % OF STOPS</i>	<i>2010 Census</i>	<i>2018 % OF STOPS</i>	<i>2017% OF STOPS</i>	<i>2016 % OF STOPS</i>	<i>2015 % OF STOPS</i>	<i>2014 % OF STOPS</i>
ASIAN	137	7.2%	12.3%	6.2%	6.88%	5.42%	6.04%	7.19%
BLACK	217	11.4%	6.4%	9.6%	9.87%	10.01%	8.58%	7.94%
HISPANIC	92	4.8%	7.59%	6.5%	5.24%	5.7%	5.43%	4.19%
AM.- INDIAN- ALASKAN	0	0%	0.50%	< 1%	.16%	.16%	.15%	.26%
MIDDLE EAST	50	2.6%	1%	1.9%	1.24%	1.4%	2.15%	.84%
WHITE	1409	74%	69.59%	75.79%	76.57%	77.23%	77.45%	79%
Census "other race"			2.7%					

BIPOC and marginalized voices in Amherst – perceptions and experiences of policing in Amherst

We have invited and welcomed input from any and all residents of Amherst. Consistent with our charge, we have made a special effort to solicit input from members of Amherst's BIPOC communities and other marginalized populations. Please read the report from our consultants, 7 Generations Movement Collective, which is in the Appendices to this report. It is a vital part of this report, and no reading of this report is complete without it. (Pages 17-26 report their findings from interviews with BIPOC community members.)

We gathered some input from BIPOC residents through our public forums, public comment periods, surveys, and correspondence that we received. However, we found that many BIPOC community members did not feel safe to share their experiences of viewpoints about the police in any public setting, or in any way that did not grant them complete confidentiality. 7 Gen conducted Participatory Action Research (PAR) in which they recruited 6 local BIPOC individuals as Community Ambassadors. The Ambassadors were trained, participated in designing the questions and methods used to gather input, confidentially interviewed BIPOC community members, and worked with the consultants to help analyze the data gathered through their interviews.

The picture that emerged from the data, although not surprising to the CSWG, is quite disturbing. The interviewees were chosen without knowledge of whether their experiences with the police were positive or negative. The BIPOC participants described many painful experiences with the police. Six key themes shown in the data:

- Fear
- Dehumanization by the police
- Distrust of the police
- Lack of APD cultural competency
- Lack of diversity in the police force
- Police disrespect for communities of color

Participants repeatedly identified racism and bias in police and their police work. They also repeatedly reported a sense of the BIPOC community being over-policed and experiencing excessive surveillance by the police.

Our consultants very carefully protected the confidentiality of the participants, providing in their report direct quotations from many of their interviews so readers can hear BIPOC residents in their own words. Again, please read their report in its entirety, where you will also find illuminating sub-categories for the six key themes.



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

We want to point out that the CSWG was very intentional about the recommendations made. The recommendations have two focuses: 1) to ensure that any public safety response is anti-racist, equitable, just, and fair and 2) that we offer preventative services that get at the root of assisting our residents to avoid necessitating public safety involved in the first place. Please note that recommended staffing levels and budget amounts are detailed in the Appendices. Each recommendation is also discussed and recommended in the 7 Generations report, which is also in the Appendices. These are essential components of this report.

1. Create Amherst “Community Responders for Equity, Safety, and Service” (CRESS) program

A great many 911 calls and other calls to the APD do not require a police response, and in fact could be better handled by responders trained to address issues of mental health, substance abuse, houselessness, etc. We recommend immediately creating a Community Responders for Equity, Safety, and Service (CRESS) program to be a civilian, unarmed alternative to the Amherst Police Department, providing community safety services in situations that don't involve violence or serious crime with the following features:

- 2-person teams of unarmed responders with expertise as mental health clinicians, social workers, medics, and/or conflict de-escalators
- Accessed either by calling the CRESS phone number directly or by calling 911
- Dispatched by 911 operators who are trained to determine which calls are most appropriately responded to by CRESS and which by armed police officers, and/or dispatched by CRESS operators
- CRESS teams will be the first responders to all situations that don't involve violence or serious criminal activity, including mental health issues, homelessness, substance abuse, trespass, truancy, wellness checks, youth, and schools
- Dedicated vehicles appropriately equipped and identified
- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Multi-racial teams, with expertise in cultural awareness, respect, and responsiveness
- Employees of the Town of Amherst, with benefits and salaries adequate to attract and retain highly skilled staff; with appropriate training, support, and supervision.
- Operating independently of the APD, housed in a facility separate from the police
- Developing a cooperative relationship with the APD such that police officers will routinely refer appropriate situations to CRESS and CRESS teams can call on the police for back-up if a situation turns out to be violent
- Fully funded, resourced, staffed, and supported beginning as soon as possible; becoming operational in 2021-2022
- Preference is given to qualified bi-lingual candidates.
- Able to initiate proactive interventions to serve those in need of services
- The mission of the CRESS program will include contributing to dismantling systemic racism through racially aware safety and social services to persons of all races with a conscious anti-racism focus

Note: It will be important that any new vehicles purchased for the CRESS program be EV (electric vehicles) because of the disproportionate harmful impact on BIPOC communities of carbon emissions and from the resulting worsening of climate change.

2. Create an Amherst Resident Oversight Board

We recommend that Amherst create a Resident Oversight Board that will provide oversight for both the Amherst Police Department and for the CRESS program. We will provide more details about this recommendation in our June 30 report, but we include it here because it will be important to provide funding for it in the FY22 budget. Funds will be needed for training, research, and hiring of investigators (as needed), and stipends. This board must be authorized to hear complaints, access police, and CRESS records, initiate policy reviews and proposals, subpoena documents and persons, recommend discipline, and initiate investigations as needed, and be able to provide appropriate confidentiality to those submitting complaints. (Please see pages 27-28 and pages 41-43 in the 7Generations report in the Appendices.)

3. Create a well-staffed and well-funded Department of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

We recommend that Amherst create a well-funded Department of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with a full-time Director and Assistant Director. In completing our charge, the CSWG could not ignore the lack of representation in local government, in Town positions, and the climate between BIPOC owned businesses and the town. This department will ensure tight alignment between Town activity and the push to end systemic white supremacy in Amherst. This needs to be strategically addressed with a formal plan and staff to execute. Diversity is not a check box, it is an ongoing commitment to inclusive environments, and this department will show how open the Town of Amherst is to creating an equitable and welcoming environment for all residents.



4. Create a BIPOC-led Amherst Youth Empowerment Center and Amherst BIPOC Cultural Center

We recommend that Amherst create a BIPOC led Youth Center. This long-needed facility will be open to all youth in town and serve the youth of all racial backgrounds. The Massachusetts Department of Children and Families Quarterly Profile for the Western Region -- FY'2021, Q2 states that 55% of kids involved with the department identify as BIPOC (see link below), while just 35 % identify as white. Given that BIPOC folks in Hampshire County only make up about 17.9% (see link below) of the population, this is an alarming indicator that the existing child advocacy and resource agencies are insufficient. The Youth Center will give BIPOC youth a voice, a place to excel, and a place to participate in after-school activities. The Youth Center will provide a range of activities such as theatre, arts, fitness classes, job readiness, and academic support. We are recommending this center be staffed with at least three individuals to allow this program to run Monday- Saturday until 6 pm. The Youth center will provide a stable place for youth to go after school and be connected to the BIPOC Cultural Center for families who need more support.

We also recommend a BIPOC Cultural Center to promote BIPOC culture and provide case management for families in need. It will be open and available to all residents and all cultures. It would be a place for celebrating families and many different cultures. It would showcase a BIPOC museum and be a space for holiday celebrations and festivals. This center will mobilize all the organizations in the Amherst area that can be utilized to support BIPOC families to bridge the gap to educational services, job opportunities, food security, domestic violence resources, and access to mental health services. The BIPOC Cultural Center will run Monday- Saturday to serve families in crisis. A theme in our listening forums emphasized that BIPOC families have nowhere to turn when crises' arrive, and this will be a solution. Both the Youth Empowerment Center and the BIPOC Cultural Center would be within the Department of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.



<https://www.mass.gov/doc/area-profile-fy2021-q2/download>

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/hampshirecountymassachusetts,US/PST045219>

5. Reduce the size of the Amherst Police Department

We recommend a reduction in the number of police officers in the APD for three reasons:

1. Fewer officers will be needed because a significant portion of the current work of the APD will be assumed by the CRESS program
2. Funds currently allocated to the APD are needed to fund CRESS, to fund other proposals in this report, and for other services to meet the needs of Amherst residents
3. Reducing the size of the APD will reduce the over-policing of BIPOC communities

We recommend that the number of sworn officers in the APD be reduced to 43 for the start of FY22. (Although APD was budgeted for 48 sworn officers for FY21, two positions were put on hold by the Town Council and two more vacancies occurred so that for most of the year the Department has been operating with 44 sworn officers. Another vacancy is expected soon, so having 43 officers will not require any layoffs or terminations. This will also free up meaningful resources to begin the CRESS program.

We recommend that no additional APD officers be hired until a robust CRESS program is implemented and the Town can determine more precisely what percentage of 911 and other calls will be allocated to CRESS. Over time the number of sworn officer positions in the APD should be reduced to the minimum number needed to fulfill the remaining police duties after CRESS is fully implemented.

One of the factors that make significant reductions in the APD feasible is the immediate proximity of the UMass Police Department and its availability for mutual aid should more officers be needed for occasional unusual situations.

We also recommend using some of the Town's Reserve funds, Marijuana revenue, and some of the Federal Care Act Stimulus grants to fully fund the CRESS program, Resident Oversight Board and the Department of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Amherst Youth Empowerment Center, and Amherst BIPOC Cultural Center.



6. Continue the ongoing work of the Community Safety Working group

We recommend that the CSWG be made an ongoing group with responsibility for overseeing and supporting the implementation of the recommendations in this report and exploring other means of enhancing equity and community safety for all residents of Amherst. This group plays an important role in gathering input from all segments of the community, especially from BIPOC and other marginalized people. While Town staff will necessarily play a large role in implementing these changes, the whole thrust of this effort has been to give a greater voice to residents most impacted by policing. Maintaining a resident working group, with the same stipulations for the composition of the group, will be important to the larger effort of building community trust and confidence in those providing safety services, whether through CRESS or the APD. We recommend that the CSWG be paid a stipend commensurate with the amount of work that they will be doing.

The CSWG has met weekly since November 19, 2020. To date each member has put in 44 hours of work into participating in our weekly meetings alone, this is not counting the time spent in subcommittee's, preparation for Town Council meetings, research from articles sent by group members and community members, webinars, workshops and community outreach. With the end of our charge insight, we are each estimated to spend a total of 80 hours to complete our charge. We bring this to your attention because we all bring to this group not only a passion for social justice in our occupational arena, but our lived experience. This work can be triggering, tiring, repetitive, defeating, but above all else it is necessary. Reasonable compensation is necessary for this work to continue.



Please note: our June 30, 2021 report to the Town Manager will include additional recommendations and more detail regarding some of the above recommendations.

ANTICIPATED AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED IN OUR SECOND REPORT DUE JUNE 30, 2021

- Details regarding the creation of the Resident Oversight Board and information from other municipalities about how such boards are constituted and best practices for them
- Making data from both the APD and CRESS transparent and easily available to the public on an ongoing basis
- Recommended policies and practices for the APD based on how best practices recommended in the literature can be implemented in Amherst—use of force, anti-bias, how to be actively anti-racist, scale of police response, police overtime and workload, informed consent for vehicle searches, etc.
- Community policing -- whether or not it is achieving its goals and is appropriate, or not, for Amherst
- Racial diversity in the APD; hiring practices
- Role of police in traffic control and investigation of possible alternatives
- Policies guiding the UMass Police Department while providing mutual aid in Amherst—granting precedence to Town of Amherst/APD policies
- Use of funds saved if CRESS proves a more economical way of providing safety services than policing

CLOSING COMMENTS

We are honored to serve the Town of Amherst and all its residents in this vital and historic effort. Our work has been demanding, stimulating, exhausting, and all too often painful. We have endeavored throughout to function with complete integrity and respect for all persons and entities in our town. We are deeply committed to bringing about changes that will increase racial equity and help to dismantle systemic racism. We want community safety services that truly meet the needs of all of the members of the Amherst community.

Our one request is that the Town Council and the staff of the Town now move forward to implement these recommendations with the same vigor and vision that have informed, and will inform, our work. Together we can create an Amherst where all of its community members feel safe, secure, and included, and where all of us find satisfaction in being part of a community that makes equity a reality, rather than just an idea.

We realize that various groups and consultants have worked in the past to make Amherst more inclusive after awakening moments have occurred. We sincerely hope that you help us make Amherst be the community we all know it can be.



APPENDICES

Report from our consultants – 7 Generations Movement Collective
(attached as a separate document)

Budget estimates, notes, and recommendations/recommended staffing levels

Online Survey Questions

Charge to the CSWG

Budget Recommendations

Community Response for Equity, Safety, Service (CRESS)

EXPENDITURE	BUDGET
I FULL-TIME CRESS DIRECTOR LEVEL 7 STEP 6	\$85,122
3 FULL TIME SHIFT RESPONDER SUPERVISORS LEVEL 5 STEP 6	\$210,936
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT 1 FTE LEVEL 2 STEP 6	\$56,115
3 FULL-TIME SHIFT DISPATCHER SUPERVISORS LEVEL 3 STEP 6	\$182,697
12 FULL TIME RESPONDERS, 4 STAFF PER SHIFT	\$813,220
6 FULL-TIME DISPATCHERS LEVEL LEVEL 2 STEP 7	\$436,794
EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS TO HEALTH INSURANCE	\$402,396
EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS TO PENSION	\$446,139
EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS TO MEDICARE	\$25,881
FURNITURE, COMPUTERS, PHONES FOR CRESS SPACE	\$15,000
FUNDS FOR ON-GOING TRAINING TO ALL CRESS PERSONNEL	\$50,000
2 VEHICLES WITH COMMUNICATION AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT	\$70,000
SUPPLIES AND OTHER MISC EXPENSES	\$30,000

Total: \$2, 824,300

Department of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

EXPENDITURE

BUDGET

I FTE DIRECTOR OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION (DEI)LEVEL 8 STEP 6	\$93,634
1 FTE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF DEI LEVEL 7 STEP 3	\$77,898
I FTE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT FOR THE DEPARTMENT LEVEL 2 STEP 6	\$56,115

Youth Center & BIPOC Cultural Center Budget

EXPENDITURE

BUDGET

1 FTE AMHERST YOUTH CENTER SITE COORDINATOR LEVEL 5 STEP 3	\$64,346
3 FTE AMHERST YOUTH CENTER SUPPORT SERVICES STAFF LEVEL 2 STEP 3	\$51,354
I FTE AMHERST (BCC) COORDINATOR LEVEL 5 STEP 3	\$64,346
2 FTE AMHERST (BCC) STAFF LEVEL 2 STEP 3	\$51,354
EMPLOYER HEALTH INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS \$154,768	
EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS TO PENSION	\$153, 277
EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS TO MEDICARE	\$8,890
FURNITURE, COMPUTERS AND OTHER OFFICE ELECTRONICS/EQUIPMEN	\$60,000
ONGOING TRAINING AND SUPPORT TO ALL THE STAFF	\$30,000
VEHICLE DEDICATED FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AND THE CULTURAL CENTER	\$35,000
SUPPLIES & FUNDS FOR CELEBRATIONS, SPECIAL EVENTS ETC	\$60,000
STIPENDS FOR LANGUAGE TRANSLATION AMBASSADORS	\$45,000

Total: \$1,170,044

Non-Union Salary Schedule Effective July 1, 2020 (FY21)											rev 6/18/2020
	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6	STEP 7	STEP 8	STEP 9	STEP 10	STEP 11
Level 1	No Positions										
Bi-Weekly	1,585.02	1,632.56	1,681.54	1,731.99	1,783.94	1,837.46	1,892.59	1,949.37	2,007.85	2,068.09	2,130.13
Annual	41,210	42,447	43,720	45,032	46,383	47,774	49,207	50,684	52,204	53,770	55,383
Administrative Assistant (Police, Select Board/Town Manager), Crew Supervisor (Buildings, Golf, Conservation), Librarian I, LSSE Site Coordinator, Social Worker, Administrative Analyst											
Level 2	Librarian I, LSSE Site Coordinator, Social Worker, Administrative Analyst										
Bi-Weekly	1,861.75	1,917.61	1,975.14	2,034.39	2,095.42	2,158.29	2,223.03	2,289.72	2,358.42	2,429.17	2,502.06
Annual	48,406	49,858	51,354	52,894	54,481	56,115	57,799	59,533	61,319	63,158	65,053
Assistant Collector, Assistant Treasurer, Associate Planner, Nurse, Payroll & Benefits Coordinator, Facilities Supervisor-Libraries, Procurement Officer, Lead Dispatcher											
Level 3	Payroll & Benefits Coordinator, Facilities Supervisor-Libraries, Procurement Officer, Lead Dispatcher										
Bi-Weekly	2,020.45	2,081.06	2,143.49	2,207.80	2,274.03	2,342.25	2,412.52	2,484.89	2,559.45	2,636.23	2,715.31
Annual	52,532	54,108	55,731	57,403	59,125	60,899	62,726	64,607	66,546	68,542	70,598
Assistant Comptroller, Executive Assistant to Town Manager, Librarian II, Program Director (COA, Energy/Sustainability, LSSE Recreation) Supervisor-Dispatch/Communications											
Level 4	Program Director (COA, Energy/Sustainability, LSSE Recreation) Supervisor-Dispatch/Communications										
Bi-Weekly	2,141.06	2,205.29	2,271.45	2,339.60	2,409.78	2,482.08	2,556.54	2,633.24	2,712.23	2,793.60	2,877.41
Annual	55,668	57,330	59,058	60,830	62,654	64,534	66,470	68,464	70,518	72,634	74,813
Assistant LSSE Director, Budget/Software Analyst, Senior Planner, IT Network Systems Analyst, HR Manager, Maintenance Manager, Communications Manager											
Level 5	Assistant LSSE Director, Budget/Software Analyst, Senior Planner, IT Network Systems Analyst, HR Manager, Maintenance Manager, Communications Manager										
Bi-Weekly	2,332.76	2,402.74	2,474.83	2,549.07	2,625.54	2,704.31	2,785.44	2,869.01	2,955.08	3,043.73	3,135.04
Annual	60,652	62,471	64,346	66,276	68,264	70,312	72,421	74,594	76,832	79,137	81,511
Economic Development Director, Senior Center Director, Collector, Town Clerk, Trust Manager, IT Applications Manager											
Level 6	Economic Development Director, Senior Center Director, Collector, Town Clerk, Trust Manager, IT Applications Manager										
Bi-Weekly	2,566.99	2,643.99	2,723.31	2,805.01	2,889.16	2,975.84	3,065.11	3,157.06	3,251.78	3,349.33	3,449.81
Annual	66,742	68,744	70,806	72,930	75,118	77,372	79,693	82,084	84,546	87,083	89,695
Assistant IT Director, Assessor, Assistant Superintendent Public Works-Operations, Building Commissioner, Comptroller, Health Director, LSSE Director-Recreation, Planning Director, Treasurer/Collector											
Level 7	Assistant IT Director, Assessor, Assistant Superintendent Public Works-Operations, Building Commissioner, Comptroller, Health Director, LSSE Director-Recreation, Planning Director, Treasurer/Collector										
Bi-Weekly	2,824.07	2,908.80	2,996.06	3,085.94	3,178.53	3,273.88	3,372.09	3,473.26	3,577.46	3,684.78	3,795.33
Annual	73,426	75,629	77,898	80,235	82,642	85,121	87,674	90,305	93,014	95,804	98,678
Health & Community Services Director, Human Resources Director, Director of Conservation & Development, Building Commissioner & Asst Director Conservation & Development, IT Director, Library Director											
Level 8	Health & Community Services Director, Human Resources Director, Director of Conservation & Development, Building Commissioner & Asst Director Conservation & Development, IT Director, Library Director										
Bi-Weekly	3,106.51	3,193.71	3,295.70	3,394.58	3,496.41	3,601.30	3,709.34	3,820.62	3,935.24	4,053.29	4,174.90
Annual	80,769	83,192	85,688	88,259	90,907	93,634	96,443	99,336	102,316	105,386	108,547
No Positions											
Level 9	No Positions										
Bi-Weekly	3,416.30	3,518.79	3,624.35	3,733.08	3,845.07	3,960.42	4,079.23	4,201.61	4,327.66	4,457.49	4,591.21
Annual	88,824	91,488	94,233	97,060	99,972	102,971	106,060	109,242	112,519	115,895	119,372
Assistant Town Manager, Finance Director, Superintendent of Public Works											
Level 10	Assistant Town Manager, Finance Director, Superintendent of Public Works										
Bi-Weekly	3,760.96	3,873.79	3,990.01	4,109.70	4,232.99	4,359.98	4,490.78	4,625.51	4,764.27	4,907.20	5,054.42
Annual	97,785	100,719	103,740	106,852	110,058	113,360	116,760	120,263	123,871	127,587	131,415
2% COLA on 7/1/20*Lead Dispatcher added 6/19/2020											

CRESS Budget Committee Notes

These budget numbers reflect our estimates of what fully funding our proposals will require. We realize that not all of this will be possible for FY22. We put these numbers together considering the following:

- The non-union salary scale FY21 for the Town of Amherst; this metric was used to provide salary guidelines for all recommendations put together by the Community Safety Working Group (CSWG)
- Appropriate oversight for CRESS responders coming out to a total of 3 supervisors, one for each of the 3 daily shifts
- Consistent training will be needed quarterly for employees to continue their work to be trauma-informed and culturally competent, this number was put together with similar guidelines to the FY21 APD Police Budget for Personnel Services (link below)
- The amount of Amherst Police Department calls that will be diverted
- The fact that UMass and Amherst College will likely return to campus going forward, fluctuating our town population roughly an additional 22,000 people who will be able to access CRESS

BIPOC Cultural Community Center Budget

The budget for the BIPOC Cultural Community Center was put together with the intentions to:

- Use a Coordinator position to promote BIPOC culture, showcase BIPOC museum, help plan certain holiday celebrations and mobilize all organizations in the Amherst area that can be utilized to support BIPOC families to bridge the gap to educational services, job opportunities, food security, domestic violence resources, access to mental health services, etc. The Coordinator will assess what services the community needs and put together workshops, informational packets, and work with the two support staff/case management staff to make sure appropriate referrals are being made to support families in crisis.
- It is important that this center has two full-time staff to provide case management for families who are struggling and provide services on a consistent basis Monday- Saturday. A theme in our listening forums emphasized that BIPOC families have nowhere to turn when crises' arrive, and this will be a solution. The Massachusetts Department of Children and Families also put out a report in 2020 that highlighted BIPOC children are being taken away at alarmingly disproportionate rates, we need to support BIPOC families in town. (link below)
- With an emphasis on supporting BIPOC families, we find it essential that proper training happens to ensure casework is approached from a trauma-informed lens while also ensuring all staff are continually trained to be culturally competent.

<https://www.amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/51936/FY21-Budget-Book-Final->, page 49

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/dcf-annual-reportfy2020/download>

CRESS Budget Committee Notes Continued

Amherst Youth Empowerment Center Budget

Please acknowledge we put together the Youth Center budget with the following in mind:

- **Supplies to make sure this program is effective is essential- young people will be able to go somewhere after school that engages them to do activities such as but not limited to theatre, arts, exercises, job readiness skills development, and have a place that provides academic support as needed until 6 pm.**
- **This center will provide transportation for young people so there is no barrier for people living off a bus line or within an unreasonable walking distance.**
- **Three staff to accommodate for different activities and a coordinator for oversight/supervision.**
- **The center would be open six days a week-Monday through Saturday. And perhaps Sunday for special events as needed.**

Civilian Oversight Commission

Please acknowledge we put together the budget for the Civilian Oversight Commission with the following in mind:

- **We are proposing a 5 member Civilian Oversight Commission to be appointed by the Town Manager and each member of this group will receive a \$10,000 stipend. There should also be funding to hire investigators to assist the Commission as needed.**

Online Confidential Survey

Conducted by the CSWG through the Town website

Questions:

I am a resident of Amherst – Yes/No

Your racial/ethnic identity (optional)

What experiences have you (or your relatives or friends) had with the Amherst Police Department?

How were you treated in any interaction with the police including traffic or pedestrian stops, noise complaints, questioning, searches, arrests, etc.?

Have you experienced or been made aware of situations in which white people and BIPOC were treated differently by the Amherst Police Department?

If you are a BIPOC person, do you believe you or your family members or friends have been racially profiled or treated differently because of being BIPOC?

Are you aware of incidents in which low-income people, young people, or people of other marginalized identities, were treated differently from others?

Do you personally know the names of some police officers in Amherst through your personal contact with them?

What do you believe it will take to build trust and confidence among Black and Brown people in Amherst that they are being provided equal protection and treatment by the Amherst Police Department?

What changes would you like to see or recommend about how community safety services are provided in Amherst?

What, if any, situations currently being addressed by the police do you believe could be more effectively or appropriately dealt with through non-threatening, alternative public safety services?

We are also interested in all of the above questions with regard to the Amherst Fire Department, EMTs, and/or Health Department. Do you have such information to offer us?

Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

Committee Charge - Community Safety Working Group

Name: Community Safety Working Group

Type: Ad Hoc Time Limited

Legal Reference: Charter Section 3.2, Committees created by the Manager

Appointing Authority: Town Manager in accordance with Charter Section 3.3.c

Number of Voting Members: Nine (9)

Number of Non-Voting Members: None (0)

Term of Appointment: All appointments expire September 1, 2021

Special Municipal Employees: (if voted by Town Council)

Staff Support: Town Manager, Police Chief, and other staff as needed.

Composition:

Nine voting members

No fewer than six of the nine voting members shall represent Black, Indigenous, People of Color, or other historically marginalized communities.

The Working Group shall elect its own chair and vice-chair.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Community Safety Working Group is to (a) make recommendations on alternative ways of providing public safety services to the community and (b) make recommendations on reforms to the current organizational and oversight structures of the Amherst Police Department.

Charge:

The Working Group shall:

Study the complex issues of delivering community safety services – currently provided through the police department and other means –to ensure racial equity;

Recommend reforms to the current organizational and oversight structures;

Examine existing Town funding priorities for delivering community safety services.

The Working Group can achieve this by:

Learning from previous work by the Town through previous studies and committees;

Examining current public safety services and how they are delivered;

Reviewing policies, complaints, and current training practices;

Exploring models of resident oversight of police departments;

Collecting data from people's experiences in Amherst;

Engaging the communities most impacted by policing to develop alternatives and identify solutions to diagnosed problems;

Investigating alternative models such as:

- o Eugene "Cahoots" - Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Street;

- o Albuquerque - Community Safety Alternative;

- o Denver STAR –Support Team Assisted Response.

Reports:

Written report to the Town Manager by January 15, 2021 on alternative options to public safety services currently provided by the Amherst Police Department.

Written report to the Town Manager by June 30, 2021 on recommendations for resident oversight and for policy reforms for the Amherst Police Department.

Charge Adopted: 09-21-2020 by the Town Manager

Charge Revised:

SME Status Voted: 11-09-2020 by Town Council